

spines nearly two inches long. A stab from one of these is an agonising experience and often requires hospital treatment. The fishermen state that if it were not for the Pelicans cleaning up the Cobbler heads they would have to bury them as a stab from an old and long dead Cobbler's spine will still inflict a very painful wound.

One cannot help wondering how the digestive tract of the Pelican copes with this mass of poisonous spines after a meal of Cobbler heads. They certainly have no ill effects on the birds as the same six Pelicans frequented our beach for a fortnight and received a meal of Cobbler heads on most days.

—D. H. PERRY, Victoria Park.

Call-notes of Bronze Cuckoos, *Clarysococcyx lucidus* and *basalis*—Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 1967: 279-281) state that the two local species of bronze cuckoos can be readily separated by their call-notes. My observations dispute this.

In the Darling Range west of Mundaring Weir, the Golden Bronze Cuckoo, *C. lucidus*, is the commoner cuckoo, being most numerous near cultivated areas where it feeds extensively on the hairy black caterpillars of the tiger moth, *Spilosoma glatignyi*. During times of low population density, posturing behaviour between individuals is rare and birds frequently utter "pee-pee-pee" calls which often culminate in a drawn-out "pee-er." In an uninterrupted sequence of between 15 and 20 "pee" notes the final note is nearly always given. Often after about 6 or more "pee" notes the call ceases. In August when population levels are high, sometimes as many as 6 birds gather and prolonged posturing takes place, during which tails and wings are fanned vigorously and a continuous series of "pee-er" notes are uttered (cf. courtship behaviour in *C. basalis*, Kloot, *Emu*, 69: 116). At other times one bird of a pair will chase a newcomer, both birds uttering "pee-er" notes. Sometimes even a solitary bird will utter "pee-er" notes, but not as a continuous series.

In the same area the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo, *C. basalis*, is infrequently observed. They usually attract attention by calling from the topmost dead limb of a tree. The most frequent call is a series of "pee-er" notes. Timed series vary from 18 "pee-ers" in 33 seconds to 24 in 37 seconds. The only other call recorded, syllabised as "still" or "strill" is given apparently at random, including in flight. This note is lower pitched than the "pee-er" call and is very similar to a call, while perched, of the Elegant Parrot.

My observations indicate that call notes may not be diagnostic unless the activity of the birds is noted.

—JOHN DELL, Kalamunda.

Catching Pygmy Possums.—I am submitting this short note to record an interesting discovery made by Mr. M. A. Moir, who farms the property known as 'Salisbury,' south-east of Borden, W.A.

I know of no certain way of obtaining specimens of *Cercartetus*. For instance, in contrast to most rodents, they do not readily come to traps; on the other hand, the very considerable number of Pygmy Possums sent in to the W.A. Museum by members of the public, who have chanced upon them, is testimony that they are common enough animals. It is hoped that the details below may serve as the basis for a method which could provide numbers of these animals to zoologists needing them for research purposes.

During the early part of July 1967 Mr. Moir hung hessian sacks over the wire strands at two levels along a stretch of the fence between two of his paddocks. The result was that the upper sacks lapped over the lower ones, which in turn were clear of the ground by several inches. When he came to take the sacks down again nearly two months later he found that about a dozen small mammals were using the overlap of the sacks as daytime shelters. He photographed one of them, and later sent

the slide to Mr. G. J. Prince, a student at the Zoology Department of the University of Western Australia. The animal was identified as a Pygmy Possum, *Cercartetus concinnus*. They were only found among sacks still hanging on the fence and never in those that had blown to the ground; and furthermore, only along a portion of the fence which was adjacent to a few yate gums, although the lines of sacks stretched for some distance beyond in both directions.

When I visited the spot in early March it was extremely bare after heavy grazing, and did not seem to present much potential as a feeding ground for Pygmy Possums. However, Mr. Moir informed me that the yate gums would have been in flower at the time of year when he discovered them, and I think the insects attracted to these flowers might well be a suitable food source to support the number found. No attempts have been made to catch the animals at any other time of year, but I would suggest that anyone trying this method should take into account potential food sources when siting the sacks.

—A. BAYNES, Department of Zoology, University of Western Australia.

Inland and South-eastern Occurrences of the Spotted Scrub-Wren.—In Western Australia the Spotted Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis maculatus*) is mainly distributed in the karri-jarrahi forest and along the coastal fringe from the Wooramel River and Bernier Island to Israelite Bay. Inland and east of this stronghold its distribution is patchy because of discontinuities in the occurrence of suitable habitat. Inland localities where the species has been recorded are Ebano, Perenjori, Moora, Wongan Hills, Bunketch, Kweda, Broomchill, Lake Grace, Stirling Range and Lake Magenta (Mayr and Wolk, *W. Aust. Nat.*, 4, 1953: 66; Serventy and Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 1967, 4th edit.). In view of the paucity of known inland occurrences, some additional ones are reported.

On 14 November 1965 P. S. Stone directed me to a locality, about 30 miles east of Wickiepin, where he had seen some Spotted Scrub-Wrens a few months earlier. The locality was a gravel-stone hill covered with dense, stunted heath, which in the area occupied by the scrub-wrens consisted of *Dryandra cirsoides* as the main component, *Melaleuca* spp, *Hakea* spp, *Calothamnus* sp., *Casuarina* sp., *Baeckea* sp. and *Dodonaea* sp. and was dense down to the ground. Two groups, an adult pair and two first-year birds, were traced by their scolding calls and animated song. I rendered the song as a rapid "tsi-tsi-tsi-tsi-tsi-hec-hec-hec" with each alternative note in the first segment higher pitched than the rest. The Mallee Heath-Wren (*Hylacola cauta*) occurred in the same general area but preferred the dense low heath where the ground was open beneath the foliage.

On 15 November 1965 I found a pair of Spotted Scrub-Wrens 2 miles east of Narrogin, on a gravel-stone hill vegetated with jarrah-wandoo woodland having a dense understorey of *Banksia ilicifolia* and dwarf *Dryandra cirsoides*. The scrub-wrens inhabited the *Banksia-Dryandra* association where the foliage was dense down to ground level.

Though the eastern limit of the Spotted Scrub-Wren is usually given as Israelite Bay, suitable habitat occurs on the south coast much further eastwards. In fact the species was recorded on the coast at Eucla by McGilp (*Emu*, 35, 1935: 105), but this was overlooked by Mayr and Wolk (*op. cit.*) and Serventy and Whittell (*op. cit.*, 1962, 3rd edit). I have seen it at other localities in the coastal strip east of Israelite Bay. On 30 January 1966 I saw several pairs of scrub-wrens in the coastal sand-dunes vegetated with *Nitraria schoberi*, *Rhagodia baccata* and *Acacia cyclops*, south of Mundrabilla homestead. On 6 September 1968 I saw a pair in similar habitat in the coastal dunes at Twilight Cove, and two pairs in dense mallee—*Melaleuca* scrub, a few miles inland.

Specimens of the Spotted Scrub-Wrens collected by me at the Wickiepin, Narrogin, Mundrabilla and Twilight Cove localities are now in the Western Australian Museum.

—JULIAN FORD, Lynwood.